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Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6804th meeting
Wednesday, 11 July 2012, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Osorio	(Colombia)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Hong Ming
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Vinay Kumar
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Farooq
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2012/510)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2012/510)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/510, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Djinnit.

Mr. Djinnit: I would like to introduce the ninth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2012/510), covering the period from 1 January to 30 June. In my most recent briefing to the Security Council, on 11 May, I noted that West Africa was confronted with a new wave of challenges to governance, peace consolidation and conflict prevention, as illustrated by the ongoing crises in the Sahel, and especially in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, as well as the overall threat posed by international organized crime and terrorism.

In Mali, the Islamist militant group Ansar Dine and other terrorist groups have taken control of the northern part of the country, with attendant security and humanitarian consequences, including alleged gross human rights violations. This, coupled with the destruction of endangered historical Muslim sites in Timbuktu, is a matter of grave concern to the region and the international community as a whole. Meanwhile, in Bamako, despite the laudable mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), under the leadership of President Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire and President Compaoré of Burkina Faso, the transitional arrangements, including the adoption of a road map for the election and the restoration of Mali's territorial integrity, have yet to be consolidated.

This situation prompted ECOWAS leaders at their forty-first ordinary session in Yamoussoukro, on 29 June, to fast-track the deployment of the ECOWAS Standby Force Mission in Mali (MICEMA), without prior request or authorization from the Malian authorities. That decision was taken in line with article 25 of the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The ECOWAS Summit also decided to dispatch a technical assessment mission to Mali to liaise with the transitional authorities to prepare the ground for the deployment of MICEMA. The Summit further called on the transitional authorities to broaden their Government base.

In this connection, I would like to recall that resolution 2056 (2012) of 5 July emphasizes the need to strengthen the legitimacy and security of the Malian transitional institutions. As members of Council are aware, the Malian Prime Minister expressed his opposition to the deployment of an ECOWAS force in Bamako to ensure the security of the transitional institutions. He also expressed reservations regarding the ECOWAS demand for including political and social forces in the Government, while expressing the view that ECOWAS should focus its efforts on assisting Mali to recover its territorial integrity.

The return of interim President Dioncounda Traoré to Mali and the need to ensure his security remain critical to providing constitutional legitimacy to the ongoing efforts to find a way out of the multifaceted crisis faced by the country though the mobilization of an already polarized political class and civil society. These conditions are demanded by the ECOWAS Summit and are echoed in the Security Council resolution.

It is against this background that the ECOWAS Contact Group of Heads of State convened a meeting in Ouagadougou on 7 July with representatives of the Malian political and social forces opposed to the coup d'état, in the presence of a representative of the Malian Government. In my interactions with the ECOWAS leaders on the occasion of these consultations, they

expressed their satisfaction with resolution 2056 (2012), which provided an appropriate framework for their deliberations. Indeed, the consultations offered a unique opportunity to the Malian stakeholders to engage with the ECOWAS leadership on the way forward in the transition. They also helped confirm that some of the decisions taken at the level of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government at their most recent ordinary session in Yamoussoukro, on 29 June, enjoyed broad support among Malian political and civil society actors. That was indeed the case of the need to form a more inclusive and representative Government; the need for ECOWAS military assistance to secure State institutions, reorganize the army and recover territorial integrity; and the need to pave the way for a consensual road map for the transition.

In the course of the discussions, the ECOWAS mediator, President Compaoré, encouraged the participants to give dialogue a chance to achieve territorial integrity. He also disclosed that he had had initial contacts with rebel groups in preparation for talks he intends to facilitate between these groups and a Malian national body that is yet to be established. The leaders seized the opportunity to reiterate their commitment to deploying the ECOWAS Standby Force in Mali.

It is important that the outstanding divergences with the current Government of Mali be resolved in earnest, as they continue to delay the adoption of tangible measures by the Malian stakeholders to address the core issues related to the effective and full restoration of constitutional order, as well as the critical situation prevailing in the north. In moving forward, it is important to remain respectful of the centrality of the Malian institutions and stakeholders and of the leading role played so far by ECOWAS. At the same time, it is equally crucial to stress that the collective dimension further exemplifies the concrete risks to which the region is currently exposed and constitutes a prime demonstration of the deep vulnerability of the Sahel region.

I am confident that the forthcoming African Union summit meetings in Addis Ababa will help in reaching a consolidated African position on the way forward for resolving the crises in Mali and in addressing the situation in the Sahel. Such a common position would inform the much-needed concerted and coordinated efforts on the Sahel, with the support of ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations and the broader international community to overcome this complex security, humanitarian and development crisis in the short, medium and long terms.

In this connection, I am pleased to inform the Council that a Dakar-based regional United Nations inter-agency task force has been set up and is currently finalizing the development of an action plan to strengthen the resilience of the countries of the Sahel at the local, national and regional levels. In addition, the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Dakar-based United Nations agencies will support the development of a comprehensive regional strategy articulating key priorities in the security, political, human rights, humanitarian and development realms in support of the countries of the region, consistent with the Council's demand in resolution 2056 (2012).

Besides the crises in Mali and the Sahel, West Africa continues to face the rapidly evolving phenomenon of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, which has the potential to significantly impede the economic development of the coastal countries and their landlocked neighbours, as well as to disrupt international maritime routes.

Since the adoption of resolution 2039 (2012), UNOWA has facilitated, together with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the convening of a meeting in Libreville, on 31 May, that brought together the chief executives of ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission. The Libreville meeting launched a planning process for the holding of a summit of the States of the Gulf of Guinea and of a regional anti-piracy strategy. The meeting proved productive in that it confirmed the willingness of the subregional organizations to move forward expeditiously not only to tackle the rise of maritime piracy, but also to act in a joint and coordinated fashion, with the support of the United Nations and other interested international partners. Since then, the first meeting of the technical group in charge of the preparation of a road map and composed of representatives of ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, UNOWA and UNOCA took place in Abuja on 20 and 21 June to pave the way for the preparatory process for the regional summit.

The recent upsurge of violence at the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, which has caused many civilian deaths as well as the death of seven United Nations peacekeepers from the Niger contingent, also

underlines the continued vulnerability of the Mano River Union. I wish to commend the four-party meeting of representatives of the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, held in Abidjan on 13 June. The meeting resulted in a series of decisions, reflecting the need for the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to work closely together to stabilize the common border areas with a view to creating conditions conducive to economic development.

At the same time, efforts need to reach beyond the Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border nexus and encompass efforts to ensure the lasting stabilization of the Mano River basin as a whole. I would like in this regard to recall the continued commitment of the United Nations to assisting the Governments of the Mano River basin in preserving the hard-won achievements and peace gains of the recent years. In close cooperation with the United Nations peace missions in the region, ECOWAS and the Mano River Union, UNOWA has initiated a process aimed at improving coordination and reinforcing initiatives already under way to face the threats posed by mercenaries, the movement of armed groups and weapons, and their impact on population movements, which continue to undermine the already fragile security of border areas of the subregion.

Regional actors will also need to redouble their efforts to tackle the scourge of drug trafficking and organized crime, which, if not addressed in a timely and effective manner, has the potential to seriously undermine governance and security in the region, as illustrated by the reported growing activities and influence of drug-trafficking networks in Guinea-Bissau, especially since the recent coup in that country.

Following my early engagement with the new leadership of the ECOWAS Commission, we undertook to revitalize the implementation of the 2008-2011 ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa, including through the West Africa Coast Initiative. In that connection, the recent decision by ECOWAS heads of State, at the Summit in Yamoussoukro, to renew their commitment and reactivate and expedite the implementation of the 2009 ECOWAS regional plan of action is an encouraging step that should be commended. I was also encouraged by the great concern shown and commitment demonstrated by the African heads of security whom I addressed on 25 June at their regular meeting in Algiers on the challenge for security posed by drug trafficking and organized crime.

Greater coordination of strategies, as well as the provision of adequate technical and financial resources, will continue to be required to assist the countries and organizations of West Africa in eradicating the activities of drug cartels and other criminal networks. Together with my colleague Mr. Fedotov, I will continue to advocate with major partners, such as the European Union and the United States, for more timely and substantive efforts to help overcome this threat, which has a direct impact on law enforcement agencies and, in the end, undermines State institutions, as demonstrated by the ongoing situations in Guinea-Bissau and Mali.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the importance of continuing to spare no efforts to prevent elections-related tension and violence in West Africa. The consolidation of Senegal's democratic experiment provides reasons for hope and continues to resonate in the subregion and beyond. At the same time, a number of worrying signs are emanating from some countries in West Africa where elections are soon to be held. In that context, it will be key to continue to impress upon the leadership of those countries the need to create the conditions conducive to peaceful and credible elections through genuine dialogue between the Government, the opposition and civil society.

Allow me to conclude by stressing that significant progress has been made over the past years towards the promotion and consolidation of peace, thanks to the initiatives undertaken by the leaders of the region with the support of the continent and the international community, in particular the United Nations. Despite that progress, the security situation in West Africa remains precarious and reversible, as the root causes of instability are yet to be fully addressed. The continued attention and support of the United Nations remains critical.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Djinnit for his comprehensive and informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: I would like to thank the Security Council for the opportunity to update it on the threats posed by drugs and organized crime in West Africa.

With increased drug trafficking, signs of drug production, growing drug consumption, piracy and insecurity, West Africa represents one of the key challenges for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and it continues to be one of our main priorities. Illicit drugs and transnational organized crime are undermining stability in the region and affecting health, democracy and economic development.

In 2011, approximately 30 tons of cocaine were trafficked in West Africa. However, only 2.7 kilograms were reported seized, in Guinea-Bissau, during the same period. Cocaine trafficking in the region is estimated to generate approximately $900 million in profits annually for criminal networks. In addition, there has also been an increase in heroin trafficking. UNODC reported 20 kilograms seized in 2008, 210 kilograms in 2010 and almost 400 kilograms in 2011. Recently, methamphetamine laboratories have also been discovered in West Africa.

UNODC is continuing to analyze the overall situation. A Threat assessment for the region, emphasizing the trans-Atlantic route for cocaine, will be issued later in the year. But let me be clear: West Africa is no longer simply a transit route for cocaine from Latin America to Europe; it has also become a final destination. There are now up to 2.3 million cocaine drug users in West and Central Africa, with the majority reported in West Africa. That means a greater need for prevention and treatment of drug users, particularly injecting drug users, as well as a focus on HIV/AIDS.

Drug money is also being reinvested in the region to feed all sorts of criminal activities and illicit trafficking. There is also a growing threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, where 36 pirate attacks were recorded in 2010, 49 in 2011 and, to date, 16 in 2012. A United Nations assessment mission, mandated by resolution 2018 (2011) to support Benin was co-led by UNODC and the Department for Political Affairs (DPA) in November 2011. As a follow-up, UNODC will address piracy and maritime security as part of a national integrated programme for Benin.

UNODC is also carefully monitoring terrorism in the region, which has the capacity to destabilize countries such as Mali. As Ambassador Djinnit has said, today the northern part of that country is under the control of terrorist and criminal groups. That could further lead to the deterioration of security and good governance in the region. We are closely reviewing possible links between terrorism and transnational organized crime. UNODC fully supports the Council's endorsement of the mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). If successful, we will be able to restart our operations in that country, after they were suspended following the coup d'état.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau remains a serious concern for UNODC. There are fears over the connections between elements of the military forces and illicit drug trafficking, and there is a prevailing culture of impunity hindering effective law enforcement activities.

In the face of all those challenges, UNODC is building political commitment through regional platforms, especially ECOWAS, developing inter-agency approaches and delivering solutions through its integrated regional programmes. The West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI) offers technical assistance in law enforcement, border management and justice reform, among other areas. Under WACI, we are working at the field level with DPA, the United Nations Office for West Africa, including closely with Ambassador Djinnit, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO). That is allowing us to combine our mandates and create multidisciplinary responses.

I also welcome the renewal of the ECOWAS regional plan of action. UNODC will continue to assist Member States in confronting those transnational issues.

The ECOWAS Commission has a pivotal role to play in building commitment among Member States, as well as in promoting sustainable reforms.

In the area of inter-agency activities, UNODC is currently drafting, with DPA, the Secretary-General's report on the impact of transnational organized crime in West Africa and the Sahel region, as requested by the Council.

The United Nations Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking, established by the Secretary-General in 2011, is also promoting inter-agency collaboration and joint actions. UNODC is working with the Peacebuilding Commission to help to mainstream drugs and crime as a threat to peacebuilding across the region.

In the area of operations, our network of prosecutors against organized crime in Central America, which was set up in 2011, will soon be partnered with a similar network in West Africa.

The Global Container Control Programme, which UNODC co-manages with the WCO, now operates on both sides of the Atlantic and is supported by a similar programme at the region's airports.

We have also established transnational crime units in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau.

Through those initiatives, we are building judicial and forensic capacity and, significantly, the ability to intercept money being laundered.

West Africa faces complex challenges that represent a severe test for the individual countries and for the region as a whole. Our aim must be to help countries sustain their development, while also ensuring peace and prosperity in the region. To achieve that, UNODC will continue to work with all partners to build the commitment and develop the necessary solutions in this extremely fluid and fast-moving environment.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.